

Masters Alumni

November 28th, 2017

Dear Health Committee,

I hold a masters' degree of science in clinical psychology from Madonna University and am writing you in support of Senate Bill 634.

I am currently employed full-time in a mental health setting that works with children, adolescents and families. I work mainly with diagnoses such as OCD, depression, anxiety, ADHD, adjustment disorders and parent-child relational/behavioral issues. My job also consists of conducting neuropsychological assessments for children who are struggling in school, and I often advocate for them in developing 504 and Individual Education Plans (IEP) based on their diagnosis (e.g., learning disabilities, emotional impairment etc.) I chose the field of Psychology, particularly focused on children and adolescents, because I wanted to make a difference in the lives of young children that would impact them throughout their lifespan. Research has proven the importance of a healthy attachment style with caregivers, high levels of self-esteem, proper coping skills, and positive social and educational experiences in human development. Many problems that people face as adults, including more severe psychiatric illnesses, have been linked to/stem from issues that occurred in our childhood. My goal in choosing this field was to help provide intervention for these children and families, in order to promote a happier and healthier childhood, that ultimately fosters the development of a well-adjusted adult that can be better serve themselves and the world around them.

On estimate, I conduct about one hundred and twenty sessions per month, along with creating support groups and additional community outreach (i.e., presentations in the community, school visits, ChADD chapters etc.). I feel incredibly blessed to help people in this fashion, and am very passionate about my career. At times, it is a very difficult and exhaustive job, but when I see my patients improve, it makes the work well worth it. This profession requires a unique individual who can put aside biases and provide empirically supported treatment methods, as well as relentless empathy and positive regard, while fostering their own mental stability. It also requires continued education and learning in order to best serve your patients. The requirements of billing 2,000 hours and passing the EPPP state exam, add another level of stress onto the job. It is often very difficult for TLLP's to obtain full-time positions, and it took me 6 months to find employment. During that time, I was studying in preparation for my EPPP, unemployed, struggling to pay for testing materials and necessary resources. When I was hired, the need for my services was overwhelming, and I was quickly seeing over 30 patients a week. Balancing this increasing caseload to meet the 2,000 hour requirement, as well as meeting the great demand for mental health professionals, is a challenge in itself. Add continuing education, personal life stressors and an extremely challenging (and expensive) EPPP exam on top of this, and you get a recipe for stress, depression, therapist burn-out and eventually, withdrawal from the field.

The needs of the mental health community are far too large to revoke TLLP's licenses on December 31st, 2017 due to them not meeting the strict and intense requirements of the licensing board. This pushes people away from a much needed career, and pushes the population further

and further away from obtaining necessary mental health services. Revoking licenses will result in a gap in mental health care, especially since TLLP's tend to serve some of the most severe populations in community mental health settings. An extension for these requirements would allow for a psychologists to continue focusing on implementing empirically sound treatment methods in their daily work. It will also allow for a better quality of their work, given the intense stress associated with meeting these requirements.

I urge you to pass SB 634 so I am able to continue serving the mental health community to my fullest potential, while during this time, allowing for more opportunity to study for, and pass the EPPP. With this increased time frame, I will be able to move forward to obtain my LLP and continue to serve the mental health needs of the citizens of Michigan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jaclyn April Hamlin', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Jaclyn April Hamlin, TLLP, MSCP